

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 remain for reconsideration.

Claims 1-3, 7, 9-12, and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,547,448 to Johnson. Claims 4, 8, 13, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson. Claims 5-6, and 16-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson in view of published application US 2004/0190841 to Anderson.

These rejections are respectfully traversed based on the following discussion.

Briefly, the present invention is directed to a press-fit metal or ceramic sleeve that is placed inside of the female small form factor (SFF) receptacle to prevent the male portion of the connector, including a fiber optic tip, from making direct contact with the inner wall of the receptacle. SFF connectors are typically inexpensive with the inner wall of the receptacle typically made from soft injection molded plastic subject to wear. As shown for example in Figures 2B and 4, the protective sleeve 40 is press fit directly against the soft plastic 10. Further, as clearly shown in Figure 2B the sleeve may be flush with the opening.

All independent claims have been amended to recite that the sleeve is directly against the plastic and flush with the opening.

In contrast, the invention disclosed by the primary reference to Johnson does not teach or suggest a protective sleeve directly against the soft plastic material. To the contrary, referring to Johnson's Figure 1, Johnson discloses a composite material lined with a sheath 12. The "sleeve" 13 is then positioned within the sheath 12. Thus, the sleeve 13 is not against the softer plastic as claimed, but rather against the sheath 12. Thus, Anderson requires more parts and thus would be more costly to make, detracting from the low cost aspect of typical SFF connectors.

Further, as shown in Johnson's Figure 1, Johnson's "sleeve" 13 is not flush with the opening 10, but rather set back into the opening quite far. Thus, it appears that when inserting the male ferrule portion 15 it is likely that the tip of the ferrule would bang into or get caught up on the edge of the sleeve 13 making for more difficult alignment.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite "a sleeve lining an inner wall of said opening directly against the material softer than said rigid support, and wherein an end of the sleeve is flush with the opening" (emphasis added).

Similarly, independent claim 9 has been amended to recite "fitting a sleeve flush within said opening directly against the plastic to protect said plastic from said rigid probe" (emphasis added).

Finally, independent claim 16 has been amended to recite “a press fitted sleeve lining an inner wall of said opening directly against the injection molded plastic to protect said injection molded plastic from direct contact with probe, wherein an end of the sleeve is flush with the opening” (emphasis added).

MPEP § 2131 mandates that "TO ANTICIPATE A CLAIM, THE REFERENCE MUST TEACH EVERY ELEMENT IN THE CLAIM". Furthermore, the MPEP, citing *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 9 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987), states "[t]he identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the... claim" (emphasis added).

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the rejections to the claims are improper under Section 102 as Johnson cannot anticipate the rejected claims since they do not "teach the identical invention". Further, since the above highlighted features are not taught or suggested, Johnson does not set forth a basis for *prima facie* obviousness under Section 103. Based on the above discussion with reference to the MPEP guidelines, it is respectfully requested that the rejections based Johnson be withdrawn.

With regard to the rejections further based on Johnson in view of Anderson, the Examiner relies on Anderson merely for teaching the existence of LC and SC connectors. However, nothing in either Johnson nor Anderson teaches or suggests “fitting a sleeve flush within said opening directly against the plastic to protect said plastic from said rigid probe” as set forth in the

Application No. 10/611,559
Amendment dated December 20, 2004
Response to Office Action of December 7, 2004

Atty. Docket No. 42P16460
Examiner: Leonidas Boutsikaris
TC/A.U. 2872

claims. As such, it is respectfully submitted that this combination does not establish a case of *prima facie* obviousness over the amended claims.

Since the above features recited in the claims are not taught or suggested by the prior art of record. As such, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it requested that the application be reconsidered, that claims 1-20 be allowed and that the application be passed to issue. Please charge any shortages and credit any overcharges to Intel's Deposit Account number 50-0221.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: December 20, 2004

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